

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Washington, D. C.

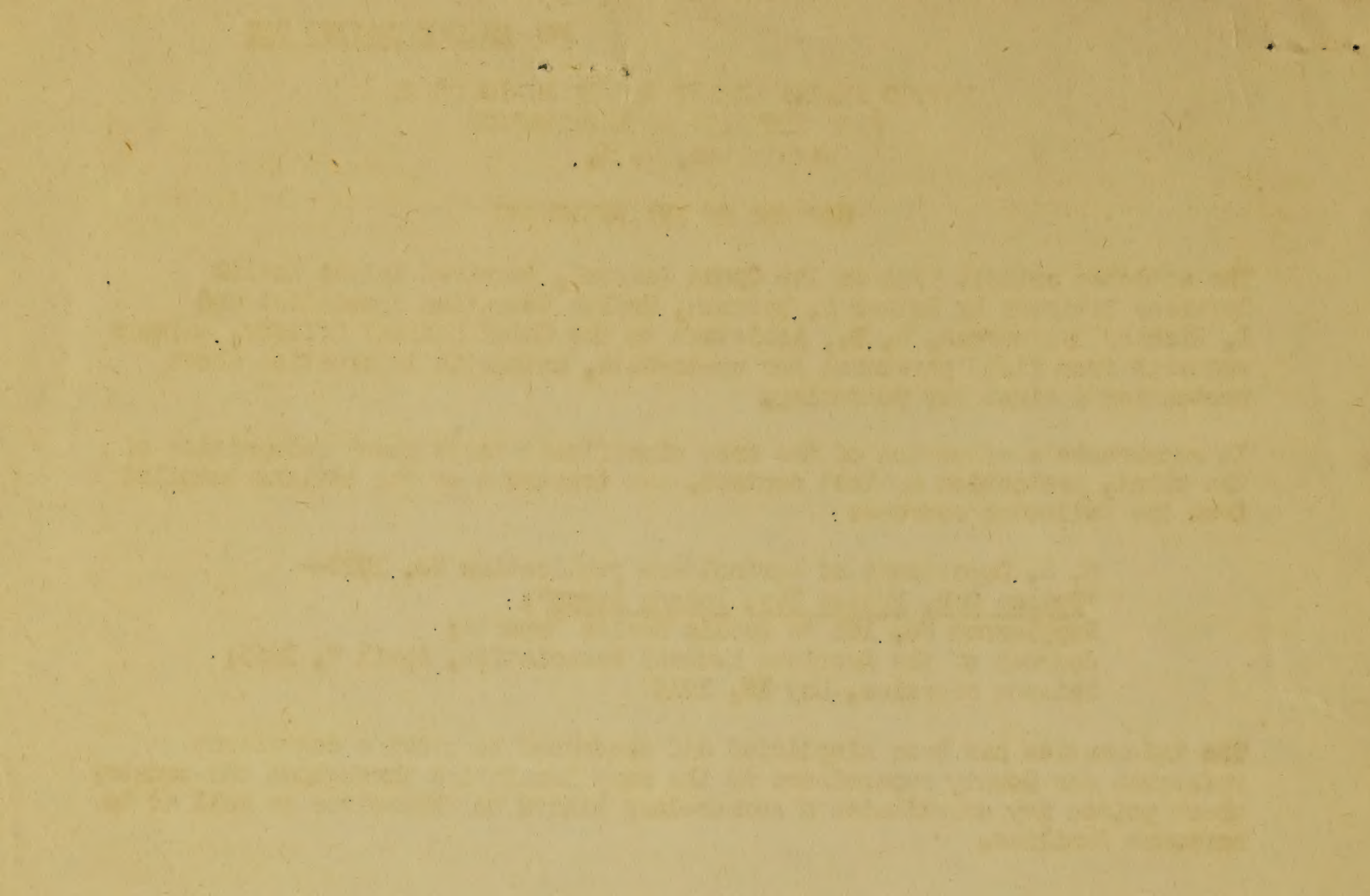
CONTROL OF IVY POISONING

The attached article "Poison Ivy Opens Season", prepared in the Health Services Division by Esther F. Huseman, Health Education Specialist and E. Richard Weinerman, M. D., Assistant to the Chief Medical Officer, answers requests from field personnel for up-to-date, authentic information about protection against ivy poisoning.

It represents a selection of the most significant facts about recognition of the plant, protection against contact, and treatment of the lesions compiled from the following sources:

U. S. Department of Agriculture publication No. 1972—
"Poison Oak, Poison Ivy, Poison Sumac";
Supplement No. 161 to Public Health Reports;
Journal of the American Medical Association, April 7, 1945;
Science magazine, May 18, 1945

The information has been simplified and condensed to provide convenient reference for County supervisors in the many localities throughout the country where poison ivy constitutes a summer-long hazard to themselves as well as to borrower families.



POISON IVY DECLARES OPEN SEASON

AGAIN this spring Poison Ivy with its evil reputation for bringing human discomfort and suffering to countless people pushes new shoots through the ground, unfolds new leaves in woodland, field, and pasture in practically every section of the United States.

AGAIN during the summer, ivy poisoning will become a wholesale affliction--throughout the country and will last until frost strips the wicked plant of its leaves and sends the poison-bearing sap down into the roots for winter.

AGAIN this year most poison ivy victims will be unsuspecting people doomed to suffer anything from mild discomfort to acute agony by the mere accident of having brushed against a plant they could easily have avoided had they recognized it for the menace it is.

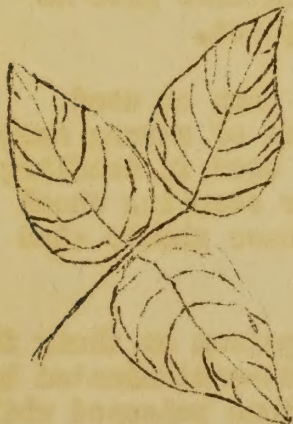
The best precautions against ivy poisoning are simple and easy to follow. Perhaps they would be more widely observed if everyone knew:

That there is no quick cure for ivy poisoning;

That although the results of the poisoning itself can be extremely painful, the greater danger is that serious complications will develop;

That immunity is not dependable or permanent--a person who has escaped poisoning many times may with one more exposure become poisoned. No person should try to immunize himself by eating leaves or stems from the plant. He may become seriously poisoned by any such attempt.

Negroes or other races with dark skin are not naturally immune to ivy poisoning.



PREVENT EXPOSURE

THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT POISONING FROM IVY IS TO KEEP AWAY FROM POISON IVY!

LEARN TO KNOW THE PLANT well enough to recognize it in all of its stages of growth and maturity. It is shrub-like, with three glossy leaves on a pale green stem. Small greenish-white flowers in thick clusters are followed by berries that ripen to a soiled parchment-white. Study pictures and practice identifying the plant in different locations and at all times of the year. Remember I - V - Y -- three letters, three leaves:

BECOME POISON IVY CONSCIOUS. Accept the challenge to see the plant before it touches you!

POISON IVY SHOULD BE DESTROYED whenever possible, particularly in the places which people frequent. Farmers should make special effort to keep it out of the fields where hand cultivating is done, and places where children play. 2,4D(DCP) recently released from wartime restrictions, is the best chemical killer to use from the time the plant appears in the spring until early July. A solution applied by spraying will kill all the leaves it hits and may kill the roots. It is not inflammable. After July 1, when the leaves have reached full growth, ammonium sulfamate is considered better to use. Two or three sprayings, one to two months apart, will kill the plant. U.S.D.A. Farmer's Bulletin No. 1972, U.S. Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., shows good pictures of the plant and gives detailed instructions for destroying it.

No measures for protecting the skin are known to be entirely satisfactory. The ointments and skin lotions which can be applied before exposure offer varying degrees of protection, but none can be considered thoroughly dependable.

Innoculations given by a physician do not always produce satisfactory immunity. They must always be taken before exposure. The best results have come from small injections repeated regularly over a period of several months before the poison ivy season. They must be repeated each year. Innoculations give no relief and are not used as treatment after contact with the plant.

Clothing and tools that have been contaminated should not be worn or used again until they are thoroughly washed through several changes of strong soap and water, or with dry cleaning fluid. Great care should be used in handling them while washing. A contaminated automobile door handle or steering wheel can poison other members of the family who drive the car. These should also be thoroughly washed.

Dogs and cats are occasionally responsible for carrying the poison on their fur to children or others who pet and handle them. They can be de-contaminated by washing, but here again, precautions must be taken not to become poisoned while doing it.

TAKE PRECAUTIONS AFTER EXPOSURE

As soon as possible after known or even suspected contact with the ivy plant, do these things:

1. Wash all objects handled since the contact;
2. Remove all clothing for laundering;
3. Shower (do not bathe) with hot water and naphtha or tincture of green soap. Scrub thoroughly from head down to toes.. Rinse the body well after soaping and scrubbing.

This simple procedure very often prevents all harmful effects of ivy poisoning.

THESE ARE THE SYMPTOMS

Symptoms vary in seriousness with the sensitivity of the person to poison ivy, but in general this is what to expect:

1 to 2 days after contact: Reddening, itching, burning of the affected skin.

After 1 to 3 days: Blisters filled with a clear fluid develop. They itch intensely. The tops may break but the fluid does not cause new blisters. The danger of infection comes from the broken and scratched blisters.

Within 2 to 3 weeks: Healing should be expected.

RECOMMENDED TREATMENT

REMEMBER THERE IS NO QUICK CURE FOR IVY POISONING, no known treatment is perfect. Mild cases usually clear up within a few days without treatment. Many popular methods of treatment are worthless. Self treatment may be worse than the **disease!**

If the inflammation is severe, extensive or persistent, a physician should be consulted. The real danger is from infection which follows scratching and poor hygiene.

The results of treatment vary with the sensitivity of the patient. Proper treatment may prevent or clear up the skin eruption of a mildly sensitized person, but for a highly sensitized person the same treatment may completely fail to affect the disease.

Treatment aims at doing two things:

1. Preventing infection;
2. Relieving the itching;

(Recently developed and still in the experimental stage is a third method of treatment which involves neutralizing the poison.)

These things can be done at home:

Keep all areas affected clean with soap and water. Bandage with sterile gauze, if necessary for protection.

Apply "anti-itching" preparation as often as needed. Among the best are ice-cold baking soda solutions, hot water soaks, calomine lotion with 1 to 2% phenol.

A doctor or nurse should do these things:

Rub tops of blisters open with sterile gauze soaked in alcohol. Open larger blisters with sterile instruments. Cover the area with one of the following antiseptic preparations, and bandage:

- a. Solution of potassium permanganate;
- b. Ointment of 10% sodium perborate and 2% potassium periodate in cold cream base;
- c. Boric acid ointment;
- d. Sulfadiazine cream;
- e. Pencillin ointment.

(Mushroom tyrosinase--a natural enzyme is now being used on an experimental basis and giving promising results.)

The same methods of control are applicable to poison oak and poison sumac in the areas where these plants occur.

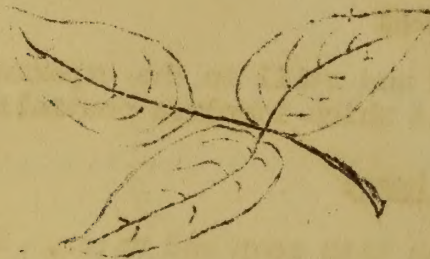
ALWAYS REMEMBER

THOSE WHO AVOID POISON IVY NEED

NO TREATMENT

Suggestion for a Co. Office Poster

POISON IVY
IS HERE AGAIN



I-Y-Y

3 letters
3 leaves

SEE IT

and

KEEP AWAY